

(incomplete draft)

ETHICAL STANDARDS

ASPIRA, INC. OF NEW JERSEY

PREAMBLE

ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey is a professionally staffed organization, whose purpose is to prevent Puerto Rican and Hispanic students from dropping out of school. ASPIRA, by nature is an educational agency that attempts to motivate urban city youth to pursue post-secondary education. Through the ASPIRA Process students are educated to realize their individual potential which will assist in the betterment of a productive Puerto Rican and Hispanic community. Outreach to the target population is conducted by a committed bilingual counseling staff at various junior and senior high schools throughout the state of New Jersey.

The following code is intended to serve as a guide as to the professional standards that should be maintained by an ASPIRA counselor. The code represents ethical standards of behavior in relationships with colleagues, employer, clients, with individuals of other professional affiliations, and with the community. The ASPIRA counselor is required to abide by these standards in order to successfully fulfill the mission of the agency. It will provide the counselor with the basis for making judgments and decision. The course of action that an ASPIRA counselor chooses is expected to be consistent with the mission of ASPIRA as well as to the letter of this code.

The following code attempts to address the cultural values that are so prevalent in the Puerto Rican/Hispanic culture. However, many differences exist between the various individual cultures. Yet an attempt has been made to consider all these groups in their entire genuineness.

The specification of ethical standards enable ASPIRA to clarify to its staff and to those serviced by the counseling staff the nature of ethical standards held by such an organization. There is a clear need to adhere to a code of ethics in order to be considered as a professional organization.

In subscribing to this code, ASPIRA counselors are required to cooperate in its implementation and abide by the disciplinary actions taken by it. The ASPIRA staff should adhere to these standards out of commitment to the clients on their caseload and out of respect to the agency and community they represent. Staff should take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues. Finally, ASPIRA counselors should be equally ready to defend and assist colleagues unjustly charged with unethical conduct.

I. THE ASPIRA'S COUNSELOR CONDUCT AND COMPORTMENT AS AN EMPLOYEE OF ASPIRA. #1

A. Propriety- An ASPIRA Counselor should maintain high standards of personal conduct in the capacity or identity as an employee of ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey. (nasw)

1. The private conduct of the ASPIRA Counselor is a personal matter to the same degree as is any other person's, except when such conduct compromises the fulfillment of professional responsibilities.

2. The ASPIRA Counselor should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, misconduct, insubordination, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation of ASPIRA's goal and mission.

3. The ASPIRA Counselor should distinguish clearly between statements and actions made as a private individual and as a representative of ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey.

B. Service- The ASPIRA Counselor should regard as primary the service obligation of the Mission of ASPIRA.

1. The ASPIRA Counselor should retain ultimate responsibility for the quality and extent of the service that individual assumes, assigns, or performs.

2. The ASPIRA Counselor should consider all disadvantage students for service. Yet, the ASPIRA Counselor should remember that service to Puerto Rican and other Hispanics students are critical to the mission of the agency.

C. Integrity- The ASPIRA Counselor should act in accordance with the highest standards of professional integrity and impartiality.

1. The ASPIRA Counselor should be alert to and resist the influences and pressures that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment required for the performance of professional functions.

2. The ASPIRA Counselor should not exploit professional relationships for personal gain.

D. Evaluations and Case Studies - The ASPIRA Counselor who engages in the evaluation of services or the analysis of cases should discuss them only for professional purposes and only with persons directly and professionally concerned with them.

II. THE ASPIRA'S COUNSELOR ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO CLIENTS

E. Primacy of Clients' Interest- The ASPIRA's Counselor primary responsibility is to clients.

1. The ASPIRA Counselor should serve clients with devotion, loyalty, determination, and the maximum application of professional skill and competence.

2. The ASPIRA Counselor should not exploit relationships with clients for personal advantage, or solicit the clients of one's agency for private practice.

3. The ASPIRA Counselor should not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical handicap, or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition or status.

4. The ASPIRA Counselor should avoid relationships or commitments that conflict with the interest of clients.

5. The ASPIRA Counselor should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities with clients.

6. The ASPIRA Counselor should provide clients with accurate and complete information regarding the extent and nature of the services available to them.

7. The ASPIRA Counselor should apprise clients of their risks, rights, opportunities, and obligations associated with social service to them.

8. The ASPIRA Counselor should seek advice and counsel of colleagues and supervisors whenever such consultations is in the best interest of clients.

9. The ASPIRA Counselor should terminate service to clients, and professional relationships with them, when such service and relationships are no longer required or no longer serve the clients' needs or interest.

10. The ASPIRA Counselor who anticipates the termination or interruption of service to clients should notify clients promptly and seek the transfer, referral, or continuation of service in relation to the clients' needs and preferences.

11. The ASPIRA Counselor should make every effort to foster maximum self-determination on the part of the client.

12. The ASPIRA Counselor should not engage in any action that violates or diminishes the civil rights or clients.

F. Confidentiality and Privacy- The ASPIRA Counselor should respect the privacy of clients and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service.

1. The ASPIRA Counselor should share with others confidences revealed by clients, without their consent, only for compelling professional reasons.
2. The ASPIRA Counselor should inform clients fully about the limits of confidentiality in a given situation, the purposes for which information is obtained, and how it may be used.
3. The ASPIRA Counselor should afford clients reasonable access to any official counseling records concerning them.
4. When providing clients with access to records, the ASPIRA Counselor should take due care to protect confidences of others contained in those records.
5. The ASPIRA Counselor should obtain informed consent to clients before recording or permitting third party observation of their activities.

III. THE ASPIRA COUNSELOR'S ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO COLLEAGUES

G. Respect, Fairness, and Courtesy- The ASPIRA Counselor should treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith.

1. The ASPIRA Counselor should cooperate with colleagues to promote professional interest and concerns.
2. The ASPIRA Counselor should respect confidences shared by colleagues in the course of their professional relationships and transactions.
3. The ASPIRA Counselor should create and maintain conditions of practice that facilitate ethical and competent professional performance by colleagues.
4. The ASPIRA Counselor should treat with respect, and represent accurately and fairly, the qualification, views, and finding of colleagues and use appropriate channels to express judgments on these matters.
5. The ASPIRA Counselor who replaces or is replaced by a colleague in professional practice should act with consideration for the interest, character, and reputation of that colleague.
6. The ASPIRA Counselor should not exploit a dispute between a colleague and ASPIRA to obtain a position or otherwise advance the counselor's interest.

7. The ASPIRA Counselor should seek arbitration or mediation when conflicts with colleagues require resolution for compelling professional reasons.

8. The ASPIRA Counselor should extend to colleagues of other agencies and occupations the same respect and cooperation that is extended to fellow ASPIRA Counselors.

9. The ASPIRA Coordinator who has the responsibility for evaluating the performance of other staff members, should fulfill such responsibility in a fair, considerate, and equitable manner, on the basis of clearly enunciated criteria.

10. The ASPIRA Coordinator and or Counselor who has the responsibility for evaluating the performance of staff or students should share evaluations with them.

IV. THE ASPIRA COUNSELOR'S ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ASPIRA, INC. OF NEW JERSEY.

H. Commitment to ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey- The ASPIRA Counselor should adhere to commitments made by the mission of ASPIRA.

1. The ASPIRA Counselor should work to improve the agency's policies and procedures, and the efficiency and effectiveness of its services.

2. The ASPIRA Counselor should use with scrupulous regard, and only for purpose of which they are intended, the resources of ASPIRA.

V. THE ASPIRA'S COUNSELOR ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO SOCIETY

I. Promoting the General Welfare- The ASPIRA Counselor should promote the general welfare of society.

1. The ASPIRA Counselor should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination against any person or group on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical handicap, or any other preference of personal characteristic, condition, or status.

2. The ASPIRA Counselor should act to ensure that all persons have access to the resources, services, and opportunities which they require.

3. The ASPIRA Counselor should act to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, with special regard to Puerto Ricans, Hispanic, and other disadvantaged and oppressed groups.

4. The ASPIRA Counselor should promote conditions that encourage respect of all cultures.

5. The ASPIRA Counselor should advocate changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions and to promote social justice.

6. The ASPIRA Counselor should encourage informed participation by the public in shaping social policies and institutions.

#1. Above copied from The National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics. Changes have been made to include ASPIRA Counselor in place of social worker.